

CHS Student Group Gives Anti-Bullying Presentations

Students belonging to the group "N³" promote anti-bullying awareness to their peers.

By [Lauren Costa](#) | October 25, 2012



This week, on both Monday and Wednesday morning, more than two dozen [Coventry High School](#) students put on passionate and emotional presentations for their teachers and peers to promote a very important message.

The students are part of a non-profit, group called "N³", short for "Not Here, Not Now, Not Ever!", that focuses on tolerance, acceptance and diversity awareness. The N³ mission statement is to spread this awareness about bullying, harassment, hate speak and discrimination throughout schools, the work place and on-line to both "non-conforming" groups and those who are targeted by chance.

The idea behind N³ was started by Coventry teachers Brad Pingley and John Ferrara, who from 2004-2009 organized presentations at [Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School](#), as well as Exeter-West Greenwich and West Warwick schools to spread the word about bullying and the effects that it has on people.

The official CHS N³ organization is now in its second year and is comprised of more than 25 students from all four grades - a number that continues to increase as more students become inspired by the group's message and want to be part of it.

During Wednesday morning's presentation in the high school's auditorium, an audio and photo montage was shown, featuring startling statistics and encouraging phrases for victims of bullying, as well as the definition of "bullycide", an increasingly prevalent term referring to suicide caused as the result of depression from bullying, especially children and teens. N³ students and Pingley (known by many as "Ping") then explained to the audience what they stood for and what their mission was.

"Our mission is to alter this school, so the VPs don't get anymore referrals, so we don't have anymore Twitter wars and text wars, so we have no more students taking days out, committing suicide, or just being sick at home because they are afraid to come to school," said Pingley.

Members then lined the stage, each holding a photo of a young person who has taken their own life or been killed in recent years as a result of being the victim of bullying and harassment, most often in school. Each N³ student shared the tragic story of the person represented in their photo.

Stories ranged from 21-year-old Matthew Shepard who was murdered in Wyoming in 1998 for being gay, to 13-year-old Seth Walsh who hanged himself at his California home in 2010 after he was relentlessly bullied for being openly gay, Ashlynn Conner, a 10-year-old from Illinois who also hanged herself in 2011 after struggling with bullies who called her "fat" and a "slut", to Amanda Todd, 15, who

committed suicide on Oct. 10, 2012, after posting the video, "[My story: Struggling, bullying, suicide, self harm](#)" on YouTube just three days earlier.

The students then introduced themselves to the audience and each provided a statement encouraging their peers to find someone to talk to if they need a friend, to speak up against bullies, or to join them in their fight against the trend that is leaving devastation in its wake.

Throughout the assembly, students took turns reciting stanzas from "The Song From the Sea", a poem written by Pingley for 2012 CHS graduate Nina Morelli, who overcame years of bullying and went on to star in numerous CHS plays, made the Select Choir and is now enjoying her freshman year at URI.

After the presentation, Pingley explained that he hopes to gain funding for the group through community donations and grants that will allow them to travel to nearby schools or colleges to spread awareness. Programs for middle school students are also on his wish list. The group has even started an Altruism Project to recognize members of the CHS community who help others and possess the values that N³ promotes.

Pingley also spoke of how many of the students involved with N³ are busy with school, friends, jobs and extracurricular activities, but still take the time to research and conduct student surveys for the group's presentations all while acting as a stage crew by providing lighting, sound, video and photography to reach their audience.

"These kids are great," said Pingley. "I'm just blown away that I have these students that give up their time and energy to make this all happen. These guys mean business."

They also know that they are making a difference.

"I have spoken with freshmen who saw the presentation on Monday and they've said that it made a huge impact on them," said Alex Heredia.

"During the performance, you can look at some people and just see the effect you are having on them," said Abby Fitzgerald.

"Our goal is to teach while we're performing," added Pingley. "Even if we make just a small difference and change the way that once person thinks - just think of all the change that can come from that."